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What's Right With the Church?

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HARDING
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WHAT'S RIGHT WITH THE CHURCH?

Romans 15:13 & 14

- I. The Subject is a question.
- II. The Answer is immediate - much in every way!
 - A. Great to see a positive approach.
 - B. Mauled & maligned by pen and pulpit; if criticism resulted in growth - the church would now be on a rocket ride. *Howard Voll #1*
 1. If the mind should go blank, don't forget to turn off the sound.
 2. Gershwin, "Give me your honest opinion" *#2*
- III. What's Right with the Church?

Our forebears answered with pride - and the praise can continue today. Some points of the pioneers. *(Cite our tradition)* *←*

 - A. There's a way that's right and can't be wrong - if there is a "thus saith the Lord".

(Calvin on Dan 7:25) #3 *2 Thes 2:15-*
 - B. We wear the right name - because we wear every designation and description of the Book - rejecting all that aren't - and refusing to sectarianize "Church of Christ" - either with lower or upper case "C".
 1. Aunt Kate Bergner stood on her porch and said, "Catholic on both sides, 2 Presbyterians, (One's been dying for 12 years but she ain't so sick), 1 Christian and I'm a Methodist."
 2. Which name strikes you as easy to wear?

C. We teach the proper scheme of redemption - outline this. - Seed of Kingdom.

1. Robert Hamm's daughters, Dewey, Okla. wanted to be baptized. "You may not know what you are doing". Girls came back with Bibles, found the passages, read it to their daddy and he said, "I believe I better baptize you".

2. Blake Williams story. *concept*

D. We have the right organization with elders and deacons in an autonomous group.

E. We have the right book - all things according to the Scriptures.

1. Ken Zeek said, "I work with a man who's good in following everything but the Scriptures." (*Hutch-Kzn.*)

2. Inspired.

3. Authorative.

4. Augustive: In faith, unity; in doubtful matters, liberty; in all things, love.

F. We have the right purpose - live daily so Jesus is seen in us and not crucified afresh. There is no satisfaction with being average. It means you're the poorest of the good & the best of the worst.

G. We are sustained by the right hope. Jesus will come again for his own even as He appeared only to His own after resurrection.

3.

1. 7 points - what's right.
2. Yet we are not finished as today we are working on a list of things.
 - a) Leadership
 - b) Retention
 - c) Fellowship
 - d) Missions
 - e) Growth
 - f) Marriage
 - g) Woman's Role - 7 more!
3. We are thinking, studying and jelling on this.
4. Don't abandon 7 things that are right while searching out 7 problems that confront us.

IV. If 7 is complete - let's add 8 planks of current achievements (Johnny Maple came tome at Hutchinson, saying "I remember Bro. Armstrong saying to Bro. Rhodes - when we get through discussing Christian Colleges, support of orphan homes, cooperation and premillennialism though I don't know what they are now, there will arise other matters of interest."

And may I add it would be the tragedy of our lifetime if the church became divided discussing unity!

A. What's right?

Rom. 15:13-14 "Now the God of hope fill you"

1. I don't know what's right everywhere.
2. Nor can I speak of a church I've never seen, as Paul could of Rome.

3. Paul named 8 & I believe they coincide with today.

B. The Elevating Eight

1. We acknowledge God & feel the hope He grants.

- a) God of Goodness, Greatness, Hope.
- b) God of patience (endurance),
consolation (encouragement) - also Hope.
- c) Author of Peace (15:33); Grace (1 Pet. 5:10); Love & Peace (2 Cor. 13:11);
Patience & Consolation (15:5) - Hope repeatedly (1 Tim. 1:1).
 - (1) "God makes a difference in a life - Interpreters.
 - (2) "God is not the object of hope but the author of it". (Plummer)
- d) Can't live without hope!
 - (1) "No situation is hopeless, only men have grown hopeless about them" (Barclay). "No man is hopeless so long as there is the grace of Jesus".
 - (2) "To have hope there must be ground to expect it and desire for it" (Bib. Illustrator).
 - (3) "God inspires no selfish hope - delays are the invisible means of hastening mercy" (Pell).
 - (4) Hope & Health co-joined.
 - (5) Koppel clip.

- e) Tom Holland writes of a former Harvard President - "The world is looking for a creed to believe and a song to sing" - we've found it.

2. Joy is what's Right.

- a) Throbs with energy. *by in your birth*
 b) Radiates in a darkened world. *Happy in the church*
 c) Our joy is:
 (1) Not riches *Isa 41:16*
 (2) Nor honors *Joel 2:23*
 (3) Nor health *Isa 38:18*
 d) But God who is eternal. *Zech 10:7*
 Mary "My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior". *Phil 13:1 (Brethren)*
 Duke 1:47 *Phil 4:4*

3. Peace

- a) Angels predicted it at birth of Jesus.
 b) Jesus gives rest. If no peace you have no Jesus.
 c) "If the child of God is filled with joy and peace, how can there be contention?" (A. Barnes)
 d) "If you have peace with God can you not live in peace with each other" (Luther).
 e) "Filled" - is measurement of the matter - God alone knows your capacity and has the ability to fill it.
 f) D. Lipscomb says it's a strong word - to feed & fatten an animal = convey satisfaction - cow & cud.

g) How full of peace are we?

4. "Faith" is the 4th "right".

Hope, joy, peace "in believing". #4

a) Can't please God without it - impossible

b) Obedient faith.

c) Pell, "Faith is the hand which takes the blessing at God's hand".

d) Rome's "faith spoken of throughout the world" (Rom. 1:8).

e) Do we have the same encomium?
Gal. didn't (1:6).

f) Faith is necessary.

John 8:24 "For if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall"

Matt. 8:10 "I have not found so great faith"

8:26 "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?"

Rom. 14:1 "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye"

4:20 "He staggered not at the promise of God"

James 2:26 "As the body without the spirit is dead"

Gal. 5:6 "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision"

g) Story of girl who forgot aunt's birthday. 5 1/2

5. Power thru the Holy Ghost - 5thly.

Acts 2:38 "Repent, and be baptized every one of you"

a) Not timid but powerfully comes.

b) Worldly hope rests on favorable circumstances - the church's hope on the power of the Spirit.

c) Live in the sphere of the Spirit & his word.

Not weather or whims
what shall I take out for dinner? Me 5 3/4

d) Godhead:

God of hope.

Faith in Jesus.

Power of the Holy Spirit.

e) Woman and gift of bacon. #6

6. Paul completes the encomium by telling why he's writing.

a) McGarvey points out he has the apostolic capacity to know & speak, yet mutually and delicately comes to "my brethren".

b) Conscious of their merit and worth - mutually (Rom. 1:11-12).

c) Richards says we see ourselves in distorted mirrors - in the carnival of life we do not see ourselves as others do.

d) Paul does not want them to resent but relish his writings.

V-15 "I know & other now know"

e) It's apostolic to compliment disciples when you can.

RSV "I myself am satisfied about you"

KJV "I am persuaded of you"

Lost any teeth lately. #7

f) Says they are full of goodness.

(1) Sisters are superior.

(2) Brothers practice an electrifying kindness.

- (3) Youth vibrant.
- (4) We function after right motives.
- (5) Obey just command of law & land - don't sell my brethren fuzz busters!
- (6) Howard Cosell - \$25,000 gift.
- (7) Hear stories-tape-no lap! #8

7. They are filled with knowledge.

- a) Study & meditate.
- b) Scriptures are loved.
- c) I trust the pew.
- d) Jerome "Love the Scriptures & wisdom will love thee".
- e) Makes us act - 2nd notice story. #9

8. 8th Admonish one another.

- a) Fuss or correct?
- b) Lit. "instruct", "counsel".
- c) Seek to edify & build up.
- d) "Competent to counsel" - one translation. (20m)
- e) Mutual ministry - not the preacher's job to do it all - but rather each member does.
- f) Everybody's on God's faculty.
- g) Plea for our sisters - keep them enlightened on congregational affairs.
- h) Those who walk in the way help the sojourner of life.
- i) Not harsh.
Bitter
Acrimonious spirit.

CAT TRAP #10

- j) "We also put one in mind of his duty when the duty is transgressed" (Haldane).
- k) "It is the spirit of New Testament Christianity to see each for the other and all for each" (??)

l) Picasso - sign sketch. #11

B. What's right?

Hope

Joy

Peace

Faith

Power

Goodness

Knowledge

Admonition

West End - 10/5/86

Harding Lectureship, Searcy, AR - 10/5/86

Columbia Christian College Lectureship, Portland,
OR-10/21/87

~~#1~~ ~~X~~ TOMMY LaSORDA: "Howard Cosell is a very generous guy. Every year he tries to donate \$25,000 to the family of The Unknown Soldier." 3-Q

George Gershwin found it impossible to believe that anyone could find his music to be anything less than sublime. #2

Once, after playing a new song for a friend, he asked, "How did you like it?"

The other made a face. "It's not up to your standard, George," was his blunt appraisal. "As a matter of fact, you've never done worse. The melody is weak and monotonous. Take my advice — tear it up and start all over."

There was a moment of silence. Then Gershwin said, "Now give me your honest opinion."

John Calvin (who refrained from writing on the Revelation) in his exposition of Daniel 7:25 has a delightfully naive statement: #13
"Interpreters differ widely about these words, and I will not bring forward all their opinions, otherwise it would be necessary to refute them, but I will follow my own custom of shortly expressing the genuine sense of the prophet, and thus all difficulty will be removed." We follow the good example of Calvin! In doing so and thus avoiding all the subtleties of the controversial method, it should be possible within the brief compass of a few lectures to express simply and intelligibly the central teaching and present-day value of the book of Revelation.

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ" - By Donald W. Richardson
Page 5 (Preface)

THE ANSWER IS "NO"

#374

The following quote by Ted Koppel of ABC News has been circulating in numerous periodicals and bulletins. Take a look at it. Grace must be a part of our message--especially to those who have stumbled. But to those who would flirt with compromising purity--the answer is still **"NO"**!

"We have actually convinced ourselves that slogans can save us. Shoot up if you must, but use a clean needle. Enjoy sex whenever and with whomever you wish, but wear a condom. **NO!** The answer is **NO!** Not because it isn't cool or smart or because you might end up in jail or dying in an **AIDS** ward, but because it's wrong, because we have spent 5,000 years as a race of rational human beings, trying to drag ourselves out of the primeval slime by searching for truth and moral absolutes. In it's present form, truth is not a polite tap on the shoulder. It is a howling reproach. What Moses brought down from Mount Sinai were not the **Ten Suggestions!** "

Ted Koppel, ABC News
Commencement Address,
Duke University

Your Church Has Real Possibilities!

By- SCHULLER, H. Robert

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The response of the church board was, "But we have a \$50,000 debt now. We have to wait until we get that paid off, then we will think about borrowing more money."

The result was that the church failed to keep up its dynamism. The community got the impression that the church was no longer growing—as, in fact, it was not. The church got the reputation of being static—not moving, not going anywhere, not doing anything—and consequently growth tapered off.

Now, many years later, the debt is paid off, but the attendance has also declined. The dynamic personalities within the church that made it grow in the beginning moved away in discouragement and attached themselves to institutions that were more alive and aggressive.

Debt consciousness and the fear of debt can kill a church. In the case at hand, the borrowing of another \$200,000 would have increased the budget by only \$16,000 the first year, enough to cover the first year's interest payment. This would have amounted to a little more than \$300 a week. There is no doubt that the enlarged sanctuary, with the additional parking, could easily have brought in \$16,000 in the first year!

Not a few pastors and lay people began to question the reality of God and the authority of the holy Scriptures. The only institution that can grow is the institution that is totally convinced of its ministry and its message. No salesman can sell a product unless he is thoroughly sold on it himself first! No church will grow if it is not uncontrollably enthused about its faith!

There is no doubt that the pastor of the church must be responsible in offering community leadership. He should be the conscience of the community. The church that

7
Doubt and confusion in the 50s and 60s

Get ✓ #4

8
Distractions which have diverted energy and

#5 1/2

Good Stories

Apology

A little girl who had to apologize in a letter for forgetting her aunt's birthday wrote: "Dear Auntie, I'm sorry I forgot your birthday. It will serve me right if you forget mine next Friday."

53/4
●
As he went to open the freezer one morning before going to work, the man turned to his wife and asked, "What shall I take out for dinner?" The woman turned and with a sweet smile said, "Me."

● #7
She was listening to her seven-year-old grandson trying to make polite conversation with a six-year-old girl cousin who was visiting for the first time. After a long, uncomfortable pause, he turned to the girl and asked, "Lost any teeth lately?"

●
Road sign at edge of small town:
"Drive carefully—no doctor, no hospital, no ambulance." ■

#6
Years ago an old lady had no money to buy food. She prayed, "Dear Lord, please send me a side of bacon and a sack of corn meal." Over and over again she prayed the same prayer aloud. One of the town's unscrupulous citizens decided to play a trick on her. He dropped a side of bacon and a sack of corn meal down her chimney. It landed in front of her as she knelt in prayer.

Jumping to her feet, she exclaimed, "Oh Lord! You've answered my prayer!" Then she went all over town telling everyone the good news.

This was too much for the scoundrel who dropped the food down her chimney. He ridiculed her publicly and told her that God didn't answer her prayer; he did. The old lady replied, "Well, the DEVIL may have BROUGHT it, but it was the LORD who SENT it!"

God answers prayer in many ways.

An ingenious teen-ager, tired of reading bedtime stories to his little sister, had the bright idea of recording some of her favorite tales on tape. "Now," he told her triumphantly, "you can hear your stories any time you want. All you have to do is push the button. Isn't that great?"

"No," said the little girl, watching the reels spin on the machine. "It hasn't got a lap!"
—HAROLD HELFER, *Good Housekeeping*, 6-70. i

#8



A citizen received a "2nd Notice" from the bureau of Internal Revenue, stating that his tax payment was overdue, and that unless it was immediately forthcoming, the bureau would be forced to take legal action. The very next day, the citizen appeared at the Bureau with the overdue payment in hand.

"I would have paid sooner," he explained, "but I never received your '1st Notice'."

"We ran out of 1st Notices," the clerk replied. "Besides, we discovered that the 2nd Notices are much more effective."

#9

— *Funny Funny World*



Sunday when we were in a restaurant Joel stood up in his chair and demonstrated with both hands how to make a cat trap. He doesn't like cats because the neighbors cat uses his sand box for a litter box. He said "You take a bunch of sticks, a rope, a piece of cardboard and a cat magnet. You tie the sticks with the rope, put the cardboard in the bottom with the cat magnet on top. You pull the rope and the cat falls to the ground." You know you can find those cat magnets most any place. Ah! Nathan and Karen are fine. Nathan doesn't walk by himself yet - just if you hold his hands.

We had a lot of rain last week which we needed badly.



#11

Picasso wanted a special piece of furniture made for a large room. He went to a cabinetmaker and, to make his wishes clear, sketched on a piece of scrap paper exactly what he wanted. When he finished, he asked what the price would be.

“No charge,” said the wily craftsman, “just sign the sketch.”

— *Bits and Pieces*